

## Mentoring is a *hot* topic!

Last October more than 420 new lawyers were admitted to the Indiana bar. At their admission ceremony, they heard comments from the Hon. John G. Baker, Chief Judge, Indiana Court of Appeals; Hon. Sarah Evans Barker, Judge, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana; Hon. Robert L. Miller, Chief Judge, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Indiana; and Hon. Randall T. Shepard, Chief Justice of Indiana. Three of the four speakers encouraged these new admittees to either become a mentor or to find one.



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How can these new admittees find a mentor? Are there mentors to be had? Is there a formal structure for mentoring in Indiana? This article is intended to provide information to attorneys seeking to be or have a mentor and to firms or other providers that wish to establish or modify a mentoring program.



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In the July/August 2009 issue of *Res Gestae*, new Indiana attorney Dev A. Parikh wrote about how helpful mentors were in helping him to adjust to the Indiana practice of law. Parikh had been an attorney in Illinois for several years before relocating to Indiana and taking the bar exam here. He found a mentor through the Indiana State Bar Association's MentorMatch



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program.<sup>1</sup> So far, 36 matches have been made between mentors and mentees through MentorMatch.

There are a few other organized mentor programs for attorneys or law students in Indiana. Most of the law schools have a mentoring program at some level, seeking to connect their alumni with their soon-to-be graduates. Some Indiana firms have mentoring programs for their associates.

### Mentoring at the law schools

Prof. William D. Henderson of the Indiana University Maurer School of Law in Bloomington has taken substantial steps in matching his *Legal Professions* students up with alumni. The *Legal Professions* course is required for Maurer School of Law students and satisfies the ABA accreditation requirement for professional responsibility, but Prof. Henderson has added his own unique spin to this mandatory class and made it more meaningful for his students.

Originally, the *Legal Professions* course was a 2-hour course taught in the second or third year of law school. Henderson, through his personal experience as a second-career law student, observed that many of his younger colleagues were going through the motions of obtaining a law degree and showed a lack of critical thinking about their future career paths. Once he became a law professor, Henderson set about helping students think about their future with intention and to more realistically reframe their "Boston Legal mindset." As a collaborative effort by Prof. Henderson, Dean Robel, other law professors and the staff of Career Services, *Legal Professions* was made a mandatory 1L course, expanded to four hours, and enriched to include attorney presentations (by mostly alumni) and a unit called "Exploring Personal Career Paths."

As part of the "Career Path" unit, students are required to build a *personal resource team* (many potential team members are Maurer School of Law alumni), which is designed to help future attorneys think in a serious, focused way about their careers. Specifically, this assignment, which includes a final reflective essay, is designed to develop five additional competencies:

1. Interpersonal engagement – building rapport with other professionals;
2. Self-awareness – accurately gauging one's own strengths and weaknesses;
3. Innovation – executing creative and unconventional strategies;
4. Resilience – to recover quickly from setbacks and remain confident, engaged and effective; and
5. Initiative – taking a proactive approach to professional challenges.

Prof. Henderson noted that these activities don't substitute for the difficult reading still required in the *Legal Professions* course, but provides enrichment for the students and an opportunity for alumni to reflect on their own careers in a positive, aspirational way. Although there is not currently an active formal mentoring program for new Maurer School of Law graduates and alumni, everyone involved with the evolved *Legal Professions* course hopes the personal resource teams become mentoring relationships.

The Valparaiso University School of Law started a mentoring program in 2007 managed by its Career Planning Center. The mentoring program, entitled "The Alumni Protocol," is a concerted effort to connect law students with successful alumni. Alumni have the

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opportunity to share their knowledge and wisdom with students, and provide guidance to young attorneys as they begin to establish their careers. The program strategically matches law school alumni with law students based on the mentor's practice area and the student's stated interests. Alumni and

student mentees sign a written agreement that provides structure to the mentoring relationship.

The Valparaiso Law mentees have the opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge from alumni beyond the classroom by informally discussing practical and day-to-day issues legal professionals face.

Christine R. Corral, the executive director of Career Planning for the Valpo law school, believes that "mentoring programs are a fantastic compliment to the classroom."

### **Mentoring at Indiana law firms**

The trend among law firms is to have mentoring programs for both summer associates and new attorneys. Thomas J. Costakis, chair of the Associates Committee for Krieg DeVault, advises that the firm has a formal mentoring program to assist young attorneys with firm immersion and learning lawyering skills. The mentoring program consists of educational opportunities, client visits, social outings and in-office activities to assist new attorneys. Mentees learn about legal issues through the firm's practice groups, presentations, brief banks and attendance at depositions and hearings with mentors. Further, the firm has social events such as a summer picnic, attendance at sporting events, a Christmas party and trips out of town so that new attorneys have an opportunity to interact socially with their mentor and other attorneys. Finally, the firm strongly encourages mentees to become active in civic, religious or community organizations, and the mentor helps the mentee explore pro bono interests.

The Krieg Devault program also requires the mentors to take mentees to lunch two times a year and has yearly evaluations of the mentee's performance so there will be an open exchange of information between the mentor and mentee. Costakis noted that the Associates Committee has a "no fault" reassignment policy in case the relationship is not working, which allows the mentee to be reassigned to another mentor without having to give reasons for the reassignment.

Indianapolis firm Lewis Wagner has a similar mentoring program for new attorneys. According to the firm's legal administrator, Debra L. Shrum, Lewis Wagner has dubbed their mentoring program, "Associates A to Z." The program consists of a new associate orientation and monthly meetings. The purpose of the program is to teach associates best practices, client development and career benchmarks, among other things. Further, each associate is assigned a supervising partner to mentor the associate. Mentors are required to include mentees in client meetings, client presentations and client entertaining. Lewis Wagner also develops relationships with outside organizations and supports membership in professional associations to provide networking opportunities for young attorneys.

Smaller firms have also developed mentoring programs for new attorneys. Rudolph Fine Porter & Johnson in Evansville assigns a mentor for each new associate. Angela L. Freel explains that the firm has an "Open Door Policy" for mentees where new attorneys are free to talk to their respective mentors, or other firm partners, about firm issues or legal questions. Mentors are also expected to include mentees at court hearings and depositions. Freel notes the firm takes a strong role in ensuring the mentees are active participants in jury trials so they can more effectively learn from mentors.

### **Newly admitted attorneys, state programs and CLE**

Some of our not-too-far-away states have mentoring programs as well. Georgia and South Carolina have mandatory mentoring programs for newly admitted attorneys (South Carolina calls them protégés). Ohio has a program that is not mandatory, but one which can

replace one of the two days of its required *Bridge the Gap* program for newly admitted attorneys.

The Indiana Commission for Continuing Legal Education recently had the opportunity to review a request for CLE accreditation of the Ohio Lawyer-to-Lawyer program. The Commission reviewed the mentoring plan completed by the mentor and mentee. The Commission determined this kind of activity is not only allowed under Admission & Discipline Rule 29, it is to be encouraged. The Commission went on to review the South Carolina, Georgia and Utah mentoring plans. The Commission also addressed other questions related to CLE accreditation for mentoring in Indiana. Here are the Commission's decisions:

1. In order for mentors or mentees to receive any sort of CLE credit (Applied Professionalism

Program credit or otherwise), their participation must be certified to the Commission by the sponsor of an approved activity.

2. Approved mentoring programs are not subject to the 3-hour, in-house limitation.

3. Existing mentoring programs in Utah, South Carolina, Ohio and Georgia will be approved by the Commission for CLE credit.<sup>2</sup> The credits are to be determined on a case-by-case basis. These courses will not be considered appropriate for Applied Professionalism credit unless all Indiana-prescribed subject criteria are met.

4. Other mentoring programs may apply for CLE accreditation, using the application for CLE accreditation, or apply for Applied Professionalism Program accreditation, using the application for

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Applied Professionalism Program accreditation. Applications should be received at least 30 days prior to beginning a program.<sup>3</sup>

5. The maximum credit a mentor may report in mentoring credit is 12 general CLE hours of which three may be ethics in any 3-year education period.

6. If the mentoring program is accredited for applied professionalism credit for newly admitted attorneys, the newly admitted attorney may receive up to 12 general CLE hours of which six may be Applied Professionalism Program credits.

The Commission clearly anticipates that anyone who seeks CLE credit or applied professionalism credit under these policies participated in a pre-approved and formal mentoring program.

The Indiana State Bar Association MentorMatch Committee has recently reviewed formal mentoring programs from

other states as well and is considering developing a program for newly admitted attorneys. Our veteran attorneys are encouraged to volunteer to be mentors given that there were more than 400 new attorneys who were repeatedly urged to find a mentor. Additionally, local bar associations could develop their own mentoring programs, using those of other states as a template.

If you would like to know more about volunteering to be a mentor or if you need a mentor, please contact Maryann Williams at the Indiana State Bar Association, [mwilliams@inbar.org](mailto:mwilliams@inbar.org). If you have questions about developing or participating in a CLE-accredited mentoring program, please contact Julia L. Orzeske, executive director, Indiana Commission for Continuing Legal Education, at 317/232-1945 or [jorzeske@courts.state.in.us](mailto:jorzeske@courts.state.in.us). 

1. Dev A. Parikh is currently mentored by Ms. Orzeske, one of the authors of this article.

2. Contact information for the Utah, South Carolina, Ohio and Georgia programs: Utah (John C. Baldwin, director): <http://www.utahbar.org/nltp/assets/manual.pdf>, South Carolina (L. Donette Welch, assistant director, SC Supreme Court Commission on CLE & Specialization): <http://www.commcle.org>, Ohio (Lori Keating, attorney services counsel): <http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/AttySvcs/mentoring> and Georgia (Douglas Ashworth, director): [http://www.gabar.org/programs/transition\\_into\\_law\\_practice\\_program/beginning\\_lawyers](http://www.gabar.org/programs/transition_into_law_practice_program/beginning_lawyers)
3. Applications for CLE accreditation and Applied Professionalism credit are located on the Commission's Web site: [www.in.gov/judiciary/cle](http://www.in.gov/judiciary/cle)